CROYDON PHILATELIC SOCIETY:

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 23rd OCTOBER 2018

Vice President Frank Simpson opened the meeting at 19.45 hours and welcomed **Barbara Priddy** to show her display of "**West African Airmails**".

Starting in September 1939 with the outbreak of World War 2 - flying was suspended for a fortnight, and censorship immediately swung into action. Barbara showed a cover posted on 28th August which picked up three different censor marks so the censors were quickly on the ball. A fortnight later came the resumption of flights and civil and military censorship ceased. There were changes as the Germans advanced and in June 1940 came the fall of France and suspension of flying. Examples of mail returned to sender were shown and one cover which was not delivered until 1945.

There was a split between occupied France and Vichy France; and between Vichy West Africa and Free French Equatorial Africa. The resumption of flights on the Trans-Saharan route but mail was not accepted to occupied France. New internal routes were developed together with external routes to Europe, Lebanon, USA and some mail seized in Bermuda. Air France crashes were much in evidence during and after the war.

In November 1942 came Operation Torch; the liberation of French West Africa; the German invasion of Vichy France and suspension of mail to France. Maps outlined the borders between the various spheres of influence in France and Africa. Mail was

carried on the Free French line from Lebanon to French Equatorial Africa and expanded into West Africa, and connections with resumed services by Air France and Aero-Maritime. Mail carried by foreign airlines to foreign destinations was also on display. Then followed the liberation of France and resumption of services to West Africa and South America right up until the jet era.

Brian Asquith gave the vote of thanks commending Barbara's coverage of this difficult period in French history with the division between Vichy and Free French Territories to which the members responded with a round of applause.

Vice President Frank Simpson closed the meeting at 21.20 hours.

26.10.2018
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Brian Asquith/Graham Harker